177 All those imports from us, living alongside the traditional traits, are no more than curiosities [99:76] in the minds of the Tapirapé, curiosities hardly more important to the functioning of their culture than one of their arrows or legends would be to the average European.

177 From what I was able to observe, Reverend Kegel usually restricted himself to the teaching of songs and the administration 797 of medicines. Owing to their sporadic quality and short duration, and especially to the difficulty of communicating through words, the encounters with the Dominicans and other visitors have enriched Tapirapé culture even less. Unfruitful, too, were the attempts to wield an influence through individuals who had been taken to the Araguaia by the missionaries and who knew more about the White way of life than those who had never left tribal territory. It is well known how easily many of the Brazilian Indians educated in our civilized centers have re-adjusted to and been re-absorbed by their native environment (cf. Baldus 7, 165, and Araujo Lima 134-135). Actually, I did not see any Tapirapé who had lived with the Whites long enough to experience the conflicts of the "marginal man" of Park, Stonequist, and other American sociologists.

164 The impoverishment of Tapirapé culture was induced largely by the diseases of the Whites, but these were introduced only partly as a result of direct contact. It is probable that the neighboring Karajá, continually exposed to contagion as inhabitants of the Araguaia, frequently acted as transmitters. This at least may be assumed as regards the strange diseases which were introduced prior to direct contact with the Whites. As Wagley (2) masterfully [114] pointed out, the catastrophic depopulation caused by the epidemics [165] that raged around 1895 and 1900, and later ones as well, affected [731] the social organization to such an extent that important traits of [178] Tapirapé culture were modified or lost.

177 The Tapirapé often told me that in the old days their people knew everything about such celestial phenomena as eclipses and [821] about many other mythological subjects, and now know almost nothing. This may not be solely the result of the mortality caused [731] by epidemics and by the bellicose attacks of neighboring Karajá [726] and Kayapó. Some old people did survive. I can imagine the pressure exercised by the presence of our culture upon the minds

262 [122:168] Fortunately, the Tapirapé is also saved by a more varied diet. Manioc flour is usually eaten along with other foods. To give an idea of the variety available at a specific time of the year, I shall list the dishes that were offered to me on the afternoon of June 21, 1935, when I reached Tampiitaua for the first time: two varieties of bananas, warmed and cold; warm and cold peanuts; raw and roasted peanut flour; peanut, maize, and manioc cauí; roasted calabash seeds; boiled and ember-roasted squash, yams, and carás; large boiled green beans; warm manioc flour; small boiled fish; warm manioc soup with small unripe peppers and chicken meat; manioc soup with barbecued fish; the raw and roasted seeds of tucum [Tr., Bactris setosa]; and sugar cane for sucking. Since I did not want to offend anyone, I ate large quanti-
123 ties of each of these delicious dishes in all the village houses that afternoon. [Ed., a paragraph is omitted.]

During my stay in Tampiitaua, I shared largely in the Tapirapé diet and got along well on this almost exclusively vegetarian basis. My digestive apparatus had never functioned as well as it did at the time, and my companion Kegel noticed that after a few weeks of Indian food my face had filled out. In this respect I stood in contrast to our camarada Daniel. This poor frontiersman, who showed his "civilized" status by eating his daily share of rice, occasionally tempered by a piece of game, with punctilious regularity, visibly wasted away. This probably was caused also by the cultural shocks he suffered incessantly, which, as far as food was concerned, were of the same order as those suffered by the Tapirapé when Reverend Kegel opened a can of wieners. A child saw those snake-like forms coming out of the can, ran home, and soon the whole village was there. Each person smelled the can and then spat emphatically to leave no doubt as to the disgust he felt or thought it proper to feel. True, this did not prevent gluttonous Kamairahó from trying a small piece, although with a certain reluctance, from liking it, and asking for more.

Unfortunately, the abundance and variety of foods which I found
262 in Tampiitaua in the months of June to August, 1935, disappeared
178 later. As I wrote in a report to the director of the Indian [122:169] Service, "in 1947, at the same time of year, I found almost nothing of the sort as I went through all the houses. It had become difficult to obtain a few bananas, a little carás, or manioc cake.

262 178 The general deficiency showed even in the size of the peanuts, for the length of their pods and seeds had decreased by nearly half, apparently owing to the quality of the soil in the new gardens. Naturally, such a change in the food situation affects the tribal [574] behavior pattern, restraining, for example, the formerly unlimited Tapirapé hospitality. It is true that this may also have resulted in 177 part from contact with the White neighbors who have settled on 291 the Tapirapé river over the past few years. As a rule, these frontiersmen either have nothing to offer, or sell their surplus to buy salt and clothes. Their bodies are undernourished, but their culture compels them to clothe it. Thus, instead of satisfying the appetite of their Indian visitors, they are compelled to inflict a new need upon them, the purely cultural rather than physical, one of covering themselves. In 1935, all Tampiitaua women went altogether naked. Now, in the presence of the Whites, many of them use rags tied about the waist, and some of them wear complete dresses. It is difficult to ascertain whether the Tapirapé are actual- 262 ly experiencing a shortage of animal foods brought about by their 177 new neighbors. It should be kept in mind that the decrease in the 618 number of inhabitants of their village has been more rapid than the increase in the number of river dwellers. Such complaints as the following were not lacking, however: "Now the Tapirapé eat only small fish, they can no longer eat tucunaré [Tr., a large fish], turtles, or turtle eggs. These words refer to the occupation of the entire river by frontiersmen, who have thus taken over the principal source of animal protein and fats. It is well to keep in mind also that every year during the dry spell, when streams and lakes vanish, the fauna, as well as the human beings in the region, have to cluster around that watercourse in order to satisfy their thirst and hunger. There is no doubt that the frontiersmen, by settling permanently on all the habitable spots along the river and by becoming increasingly numerous, will continue to deplete the game and fish, which the Indians used to exploit only at certain times of the year. In any case, the fact that Tampiitaua has been moved lately farther from the river and farther north seems to prove that the Tapirapé felt threatened by the proximity of the White settlers" (Baldus 12).

2: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940) 1940
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and only 147 inhabitants. This is an extraordinary example of the ravages of European diseases among a native American people.

Tapirapé (Village of the Tapir) is composed, therefore, of a residue from all of the five original villages. All of the customs and ceremony attached to inter-village relations have of course disappeared. People remember their former village affiliation, or that of their parents. They still speak of a person as being "the son of Fish Village," but village loyalty, once strong, has disappeared. Formerly, villages were basically endogamous, but some marriage outside of the village did take place. Today, only three people can say that they are descendants of people from Tapir Village. Ancient inter-village antagonism existed, especially between Tapir and the village which joined with it in 1900. Today, this conflict is only remembered under the stress of some quarrel and is referred to only as a taunt.

Depopulation has had little effect on the economic life of the Tapirapé. They are basically a forest agricultural people with large plantations. Manioc is their staple. Plantations are large enough, and the economic organization fluid enough, to allow for the support of large numbers of refugees for a year or so until they can make gardens for themselves. Refugees have joined one of the large households, at present eight, each with some twenty-five to thirty people. Formerly these households were matrilineal groups headed by a man of high prestige. His wife's relatives formed the matrilineal group and he demanded labor from his numerous sons-in-law (husbands of daughters of wife, including extended "daughters"). The coming of refugees disrupted these matrilocal households. If a refugee woman lacked a close female kin, her husband often arranged for habitation with a friend or a relative of his. Men of high status offered the hospitality of their houses to incoming men of rank. Today, therefore, many reassortments of relatives live under one roof, and two and even three separate groups of female relatives live under as many older men, whereas formerly they would have formed one household under the leadership of one household head. In no one case, does a man control a complete household as he would have done under the old system.

2: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940) 1940
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The men's moieties form the basis for Tapirapé ceremonial and for cooperative gardening and hunting. Each moiety is divided into three age grades. Thus, in the village, there are two groups of "boys" and "youths" (up to sixteen years of age), two of mature men or "warriors" (up to approximately 45), and two groups of "older men." Really old and inactive men give up moiety activity and have no affiliation. A boy belongs automatically to the moiety of his father and formerly he progressed through the three age grades of that moiety. All ceremonies involve the moiety age grades, which dance against each other, race against each other, and give reciprocal feast exchanges. Cooperative hunts and clearing of the forest likewise involve reciprocal activities. However, with the great loss of population, and especially a loss of men of the oldest age group, this organization was thrown out of balance. In order to continue ceremonial life, several youths, who were spoken of as "lazy" and who were not capable hunters or workers, passed into the "older men's" age groups, in which there is little active cooperative hunting and gardening, in order to give those groups sufficient numbers for ceremonial activity. This rapid passing from boys' age grade to that of older men has influenced native thought in two ways:— First, young men are losing the idea of automatic progression through the three age grades, and there is a tendency now to think that the better young men become "warriors," while less capable ones pass rapidly to the older men's group. Second, the older men's age grades, formerly the groups of highest prestige, tend to be looked on with little favor, and only those individuals are thought of with respect who have status for other reasons.

Depopulation has also affected the second Tapirapé social grouping—the feast groups. These are made up of all men and women. They are matrilocal for women and patrilocal for men. These feast groups meet periodically during the dry season for ceremonial meals. At present, three of the original ten feast groups have disappeared because of lack of members.

Chieftainship has changed under the influence of both depopulation and the sporadic contacts with Brazilians. All men of

2: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940) 1940
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status are, today, called "capitaces" (The Tapirape use the Portuguese word. There is no equivalent in their language.) These "capitaces" are village elders (who were village "favorite children" in their youth, and therefore people of prestige), leaders of the warriors, age grades, and able shamans. Formerly, there were only two village elders, two warrior leaders, and, ideally, two favorite children in a village. Today, with congregation of people from all villages in one, several "noble" families are present and there is an oversupply of "capitaces."

Marriage arrangements, too, have been affected by depopulation. At present, there are some ten men of marriageable age, for whom there are no possible wives, and immediate families are so broken up that there are no possible groups of women to care for these unattached men. A man must have a wife to cook for him and perform women's tasks. To do any woman's work would play complete havoc with a man's personal prestige, which is a matter of greatest importance. Most of these Tapirape men have solved their problem by contracting convenient "social" marriages with extremely young girls. They attach themselves to a household, in which they perform a man's customary economic duties, and, in turn, their mothers-in-law do women's work for them.

Lack of time prevents mention of many other aspects of native life pertaining to marriage, kinship, and leadership, which have been profoundly affected by depopulation. Possibly, in other cultures, the effects of introduced disease have not been quite so disastrous, nor the loss of people so important to the social life, as in the case of the Tapirape. Without a doubt, however, wherever there have been sporadic contacts with Europeans, these or other alien factors have been introduced and have caused important changes in the structure of native life.

3: Wagley E-5 (1939-1953) 1955
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TAPIRAPÉ SOCIAL AND CULTURE CHANGE 1940-1953

by

CHARLES WAGLEY

The Tapirapé are a Tupi-speaking tribe whose aboriginal habitat lay between the Araguaya and Xingu rivers in central Brazil. Tapirapé society and culture, as it existed before 1940, has been described by Herbert Baldus and the present author in a series of articles and monographs.[1] In 1940, when I left the Tapirapé village after approximately eighteen months of residence and research, I was convinced that Tapirapé society was rapidly disintegrating and that it would soon cease to exist as a distinct organized unit. At that time, although Tapirapé culture was essentially unchanged from its aboriginal condition, severe depopulation had so disrupted the social structure that the society seemed no longer to satisfy the minimal conditions for group survival.[2] A mere 147 individuals grouped in but one village were all that remained in 1940 of this tribe that once had numbered at least one thousand people living in five large villages. In 1953, when I returned for a short visit of three weeks with the Tapirapé Indians in their new village at the mouth of the Tapirapé River on the Araguaya, I found but 51 individuals. The rapid process of depopulation

1. Cf. Herbert Baldus, *Ensaios de Etnologia Brasileira*, São Paulo, 1937, and "Os Tapirapé, tribo Tupi no Brasil Central," *Revista do Arquivo Municipal*, Vols. XCVI-CV, CVII-CXXVII, São Paulo, 1944-49; and Charles Wagley, "Tapirapé Shamanism," *Boletim do Museu Nacional, Antropologia*, N.º 3, Rio, 1943.

2. Charles Wagley, "The Effects of Depopulation upon Social Organization as Illustrated by the Tapirapé Indians," *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Series II, Vol. 2, N.º 1, pp. 12-16, New York, 1940.

31 Wagley E-5 (1939-1983) 1955
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had continued during the last thirteen years. Yet I found that even with so small a population Tapirapé society still functioned as an organized unit and Tapirapé culture persisted, although highly modified by the events of the last thirteen years. Several points of theoretical importance can be learned from recent Tapirapé history and from some observations on social and cultural changes since 1940.

The sketchy outline of Tapirapé history between 1940 and 1953, which I have been able to piece together with the help of the Indians themselves, of Sr. Valentim Gomes (the officer of the post of the Brazilian Indian Service which services the Tapirapé, and my companion during both visits to the tribe in 1939-40), and of a published report by Herbert Baldus,[1] indicates the tremendous shocks this society has suffered in the last decade. Briefly, this history is as follows: In 1941, just a year after my 1940 visit, a serious epidemic broke out in the Tapirapé village in which I had lived. As usual, following an epidemic during which there is a series of deaths, dissension broke out within the village. A well-known shaman was killed and a group of Tapirapé ("perhaps thirty in number") fled the village to the Brazilian town of Furo de Pedra, some two hundred kilometers from their village. It is reported that at least two people died during this trip and that the group returned to their village infected with common colds. By August of 1940, Sr. Gomes was able to ascertain that twenty-six people had died since June of the same year. In September of 1941 an Indian Post for the protection of the Tapirapé was opened, but it was established at the mouth of the Tapirapé River, near the Carajá whom the Tapirapé feared and near Brazilians from whom they contracted new infections. That year, a few Indians visited the Post but after the death of a young Tapirapé man at the Post and an unfortunate experience with a group of drunken Brazilian men, only rarely did a Tapirapé

1. "Tribos da Bacia do Araguaia e o Serviço de Proteção aos Indios", in *Revista do Museu Paulista*, N. S., Vol. II, São Paulo, 1948, pp. 137-152.

3: Wagley E-5 (1939-1953) 1955
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they might beg from the Brazilian. Another group of families came to live at the Indian post near the mouth of the Tapirapé River, where the Indian officer helped them build temporary shelters and provided them with food. And earlier, before the Kayapó attack, a small group of families had broken from the main village to migrate to a distant village site called Čičutawa, far to the north.[1] During these years, ceremonial and religious life, normal family life, aboriginal economic activities, and in fact most of the regular activities of their society were either completely suspended or affected by a marginal existence to the Brazilian frontiersmen.

But in 1950 Tapirapé society was, in a sense, re-organised. As a result of the efforts of the Indian officer, all of the remaining Tapirapé (except those who had migrated to the north) came together to form a village which they called *Tawiãho* (New Village), some six kilometers from the Post Heloísa Alberto Torres. By 1953 this village had been fully completed, and the Tapirapé had relatively large and productive gardens in the forest some three or four kilometers from it. The village had been constructed, as in aboriginal times, in a circle surrounding a large men's ceremonial house. The houses were in general of the aboriginal type, each housing several biological families. Ceremonials had begun again and, as before, the nights were filled with singing. Although considerably modified, normal Tapirapé social life was again possible. Although for a short period Tapirapé *society* might be said not to have existed, Tapirapé *culture* continued to live in the minds of these few remaining individuals and it allowed them, given the opportunity, to recreate, although in a much attenuated form, their social life. This is a striking example of the difference between a society and its culture.

But both Tapirapé society and Tapirapé culture had been considerably modified by the events of the last decade. There were striking differences in social

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 127-136. This group has never been heard of since they left. It is the opinion of the remaining Tapirapé that they were killed by the Kayapó since Čičutawa is near Kayapó territory.

3: Wagley E-5 (1939-1953).1955
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the possibility of comparison, of observing other forms of behavior which were formerly closed to them, now stimulates change in Tapirapé culture.

Numerous other modifications in the Tapirapé way of life might be reported. In 1953, a few Tapirapé collected money which they kept as they formerly kept red parrot feathers in a bamboo container, but they have only vague ideas of its value. Two men own rifles but they have little idea of how to keep them in order. Men wear trousers when they visit the Indian Post, but they might at any time calmly remove them in the presence of the missionaries, and women have learned quickly to put on a wrap-around skirt when Brazilian men approach. These and a series of other changes might be quickly noted as having occurred between 1940 and 1953.

Still, Tapirapé culture has remained remarkably stable in face of the violent disruption of Tapirapé society during this last decade. Tapirapé culture has been modified by borrowing and by loss of trait and pattern due to the reduction of population and the disorganization of the society. Tapirapé society, with fewer people and new influences, has now changed more than Tapirapé culture. Certainly society and culture are intimately related phenomena but the history of the Tapirapé during the last thirteen years indicates the value of distinguishing between social change on the one hand and culture change on the other. For a period the Tapirapé lived as members of a distinct society, but their culture persisted, and with this knowledge they have been able to recreate, at least temporarily, their organized social unit.

4: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940) 1943
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INTRODUCTION

The Tapirapé Indians are a Tupi-speaking tribe living in Central Brazil west of the Araguaya River. Their villages formerly extended some two hundred miles to the north of the Tapirapé River, an affluent of the Araguaya; but today their one remaining village lies west of the Araguaya, about forty miles north of the Tapirapé and 160 miles from the point of union of the two rivers. This settlement contains a total population that does not exceed 150 people, the residue of five villages that probably existed so late as the turn of the century and that are said to have had a population of about two hundred people each. A progressive population decline has followed the acquiring of diseases from contact with the neighboring Carajá Indians of the Araguaya River and from European visitors. Such contacts, however, have left their aboriginal culture little changed.

The Tapirapé are properly a forest people, maintaining an agricultural life on clearings hewed from the great tropical forest. Their cultivated fields are large producing manioc (both *Manihot manihot* and the sweet species *Manihot palmata aggi*), maize, pumpkins, beans, peppers, yams, karâ (*Dioscorea sp.*), cotton, and bananas.

The dry months of June through September of each year are devoted to clearing the garden sites. This work is done by men, frequently working individually, sometimes in communal labor formed by the men's society groups (1). When the clearing is done collectively, the large field is divided into individual plots which become individual property;

(1) There is an excellent description of this ceremonial activity, called *apetawa* by the Tapirapé in Herbert Baldus, 1937, "Os grupos de cantar e os grupos de trabalho dos Tapirapé", *in Ensaios de Etnologia Brasileira*, pp. 98-111. São Paulo.

[p.61]
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162 What strikes us in the above table is, on the one hand, the small number of children in relation to adults (18 individuals through 15 years of age and 41 over 15 years of age), and, on the other hand, [165] the brevity of the life span (only ten individuals were over 30). Only one man and one woman were slightly over 40.

According to the reports that I received in October, 1947, from [115] Mr. Valentim Gomes, the man in charge of the Indian post Heloisa Alberto Torres, and from Father M. H. Lelong at Conceição do Araguaia, the numerical ratios listed above underwent modifications [726] caused by the Kaiapó [Cayapo] attack on Tampiitáua at the end of August, in the course of which three women were killed and two women and one boy were abducted. Of the 59 individuals examined, therefore, there remained 31 males and 22 females.

[847] Aside from illness, the custom of killing newborn children under certain circumstances contributes to the decimation of the tribe.

●178 Of the changes in Tapirapé culture which occurred since my first 262 visit 12 years ago, I wish to mention primarily the scarcity of 241 vegetable foods. The literature on these peaceful and industrious Tupí Indians contains numerous references to their large plots. I may add that in the quantity and variety of their garden produce they outstripped not only the neighboring tribes but also the frontier people. In 1935, in the months of June to August, I found the village provided abundantly with the most delicious bananas, five varieties of manioc and numerous other tubers, beans, peanuts, and maize. In 1947, at the same time of year, I found almost nothing of the sort as I went through all the houses. It had become difficult to obtain a few bananas, a little carás [Tr., a variety of yam], or manioc cake. The general deficiency showed even in the size of the peanuts, for the length of their pods and seeds had decreased by nearly half, apparently owing to the quality of the soil in the new gardens. Naturally, such [574] a change in the food situation affects the tribal behavior pattern, restraining, for example, the formerly unlimited Tapirapé hospitality.

It is true that this may also have resulted in part from contact 177 with the neighboring Whites who have settled on the Tapirapé River [648] over the past few years. As a rule, these frontiersmen either have nothing to offer or sell their surplus to buy salt and clothes. Their 177 body is undernourished, but their culture compels them to clothe it. 291 Thus, instead of satisfying the appetites of their Indian visitors, they

12: Wagley & Galvão E-5 (1939-1940)1948
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601 [182] [611] **Kinship.**—Kinship is more important in furthering solidarity among the *Tapirapé* than either the moieties or the feast groups. *Tapirapé* kinship is bilateral, its chief principle being that all cousins, whether cross- or parallel-cousins, no matter how distant, are considered brothers and sisters. Children of people calling each other siblings are also called siblings. Mother's sisters are called mother, and father's brothers, father. Mother's brothers and father's sisters are distinguished by special terms. Similarly, a man's brothers' children are considered his sons and daughters, and a woman's sisters' children are her children. Children of a man's sisters or a woman's brothers are given special terms.

[621] [178] The wide inclusiveness of kinship affiliation makes it possible for an individual to call the majority of his fellow villagers—and in former days many people in other villages—by terms of close relationship.

554 581 597 592 An older man of some prestige gathers around him by adoption as many "daughters" or as many of his wife's "daughters" as possible. By the marriage of these "daughters," he attracts a group of younger men within his household who contribute constantly to his larder through the hunt and garden activities. At present, only three of the nine houses in the village were formed in this way, but reduced numbers, we were told, forced various combinations of relatives to share a household.

LIFE CYCLE

842 **Childbirth.**—Although aware that pregnancy is brought about by sexual intercourse, the *Tapirapé* believe that conception takes place when a shaman, serving as intermediary, brings a "child spirit" to the woman. Thunder, night, monkeys, wild pigs, and various fish and insects are supposed to contain child spirits.

843 When the woman is certain that she is pregnant, she tells her husband. They both paint their bodies with genipa and cover their hair with urucú. During the first few days of pregnancy, no restraints are imposed upon the child's parents, but as birth approaches, all sexual contact must cease. [851] All men who have sexual relations with a woman during her pregnancy are considered fathers of the future child, together with the real father.

844 At childbirth the woman is assisted by her mother and sister and by two male relatives. The husband retires to his hammock and is forbidden to partake of any liquid refreshment.

847 Infanticide is practiced because it is considered bad to have more than three children, or two children of the same sex. The fourth child, or third of the same sex, of one mother is buried in a hole dug inside the residence for the afterbirth.

852 854 851 262 On the day after birth, a male child has his lower lip perforated. Until the child is weaned, the parents must refrain from sexual relations and must not eat salt, sugar, honey, or the meat of various animals and forest fowls. Both boys and girls also are restricted in their meat diet. A son

12: Wagley & Galvão E-5 (1939-1940) 1948
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A son

and sometimes a daughter of important people may be treated as a favorite child, being given special attention and education and being highly decorated during various ceremonies in which such children are central figures. Treatment as a "favorite child" brings prestige throughout one's whole life.

Puberty.—When a boy is about 12 years old, he ties his prepuce over the glans penis. His hair is cropped close to his head, and his entire body is painted black with genipa. He substitutes a short mother-of-pearl lip plug for the long bone one worn by young boys. During this time, the boy must sleep in the men's house. His arms and legs are scratched from time to time deep enough to draw blood, so that he will grow strong.

When he is about 14 years old, his hair is allowed to grow and is tied at the nape of his neck. His hair is not cut for a year or two in preparation for his puberty ceremony, which is considered the most important event in a man's life. On the appointed day, the boy is richly ornamented, the main ornament being a large diadem principally of red macaw feathers set in a heavy block of wood (pl. 19, *top, left*). This diadem is supported by the hair and weighs well over 10 pounds. For 24 hours the boy is forced to dance continually under the weight of excessive decoration to prove his endurance.

During a girl's first three menstrual cycles, a geometric pattern is traced with genipa on her body. During this time, she must refrain from sexual relations. There is no special puberty ceremony for girls. Girls are usually already married at puberty, especially at present with the lack of women.

Marriage.—Formerly there was some intervillage antagonism, and people preferred to marry within their own village. Despite such antagonism and the fact that villages were 2 to 3 days' walk apart, considerable intervillage visiting occurred, and genealogies show that intervillage marriage was not rare. Today, with refugees from all villages in the one village, antagonisms and local village patriotism exist only in the memory of older people.

Men marry immediately after the initiation rites, and the women, at least in modern times, at any time after the age of 7 or 8 years. People do not marry cousins who are called "brother" and "sister" of close connection, but marriage with those of distant relationship is not infrequent. Monogamy is the absolute rule.

Because the population has declined and men outnumber women, marriage rules have been somewhat altered. All women have husbands, and there are now about 10 young men waiting for 7- or 8-year old girls. There are also marriages between men and very young pre-adolescent girls; these are brought about because the men are greatly dependent on the women's work. In such cases, the husband goes to live in his wife's house, where his mother-in-law helps the girl work for him.